At the end of the session, the PICK tool generates a graph that shows the areas of knowledge that deserve the most attention.

The results of the session can then be used by court managers to:

- Determine the strategies that are most appropriate for preventing critical knowledge loss (for example, some knowledge can be documented, while other knowledge needs to be transferred through mentoring and on-the-job experience);

- Understand training and curriculum planning needs for particular positions;

- Structure development programs and experiences for more junior employees who will be replacing those who are leaving; and

- Work with HR professionals in designing job and experience requirements for incoming staff.

The tool currently is recommended for use in individual courts. Over time, the results will also be helpful for branchwide education, knowledge management, development, and hiring.

How can I find out more?

The *Knowledge Management Handbook* contains detailed information on how to use the PICK tool, including facilitation tips for running a PICK session.

To receive a handbook or for more information on setting up a PICK session in your court, please contact:

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PICK™

A New Tool for Identifying Critical Knowledge in the Courts

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Why was the PICK tool developed?

Many court managers have expressed concern about knowledge loss due to the impending retirement of some of their most experienced employees. They have even begun to think about ways to document and capture what these employees "have in their heads."

But short of asking people to write down everything they know, managers and administrators often don't know where to begin.

What *is* the PICK tool?

The PICK (Plotting Incumbent Critical Knowledge) tool is a customized software that is designed to help court managers:

- Identify critical knowledge associated with specific positions and

- Prioritize positional knowledge in order to capture and transfer what is most critical.

What is "critical" knowledge?

Critical knowledge is **positional knowledge** (knowledge associated with a particular court position, such as courtroom clerk) that has high:

- Risk of loss and

- Relative importance.

Knowledge has a **high risk of loss** if the individuals possessing it are likely to retire or leave the organization soon, and the knowledge is:

- Not well documented;

- Not taught in any training programs;

- Confined to a single role;

- Not easily transferable; and

- Learned over a long period of time.

Knowledge has a **high relative importance** if it is more important to success in the position than other knowledge.

Why is it important to identify critical knowledge?

Over the next several years, critical knowledge in the judicial branch is in danger of being lost as experienced court professionals retire. It is important for the branch to begin putting in place programs and initiatives that will:

- Capture this knowledge (in the form of documents, training courses, procedural manuals, or software programs);

- Transfer it to those who will replace exiting employees; and

- Ensure that individuals brought into the organization from the outside possess this knowledge to the extent possible.

How is the PICK tool used, and what does it produce?

The tool functions on the basis of knowledge profiles. A **knowledge profile** is a comprehensive summary of the knowledge and responsibilities associated with a particular position. It's organized like a taxonomy, with both higher- and lower-level categories of knowledge. Profiles have already been developed for some positions.

If a knowledge profile exists for a particular position, the PICK tool is ready for use.

Generally the tool is used by a group of position incumbents in a facilitated session. The incumbents are asked to discuss and agree on the importance and risk of loss for each knowledge category. They prioritize what is important to success in their jobs.

This kind of session helps identify not only the knowledge that is at risk of loss but why it may be lost.